

Junior Soldiers

Unit 11 : Lesson 10



Sheep & Goats!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that God is entitled to judge us and he does so fairly. This is God's creation and there are rules in place for how we are to live, what is right and what is wrong.

'We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.'

Doctrine 11

'We believe in Christ's return in glory, the completion of God's Kingdom, the resurrection of the body, the final accountability of all persons to God, Heaven and Hell, the endless despair of those who reject salvation and the eternal happiness of those who are righteous through faith.'

Doctrine 11 (simplified)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Matthew 25:1–13; 31–46

John 5:24–30

The Handbook of Doctrine – chapter 11, p. 223–228

Many Salvationists find this a difficult doctrine to fully understand, containing many heavy theological concepts and ideas that can't be unpacked and explained in a short time—even more so when being taught to children! We need to make sure that what we teach our children is in agreement with Salvation Army beliefs and that we understand ourselves what we are trying to convey to the children.

To assist with this, this lesson focuses predominantly on just one part of this doctrine—'the general judgment at the end of the world'—and the other parts are only alluded to in passing. This is not the time to be strongly focusing on what the 'resurrection of the body' looks like or how 'endless punishment' feels!

Leaders are advised to read the section in *The Handbook of Doctrine* suggested above and put some thought into the doctrine—while parts of it will not be focused on in this lesson, you need to be ready if children ask you a question about a related matter to what you're discussing.

There are laws of the land we are accountable to and, if we breach those laws, we may find ourselves in a court room where we will be judged on our adherence or breaching of those laws.

Similarly, this is God's creation and there are laws in place for how we are to behave in relation to others and in relation to God, one day we will be judged on our adherence or breaching of those laws.

To deny that we will one day face judgment is to deny large portions of the Bible and the teaching of Jesus himself. The doctrine of judgment is not up for debate with Salvationists—it's part of the Bible and it's part of our doctrines.



What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- A container for each group
- Five items for construction: include the same amount of each item in each group's container, e.g. icy-pole sticks, straws, sheets of paper, pegs, sticky tape, paper clips, pipe cleaners, paper plates, Blu-tack, pencils etc.

For 'The Main Thing'

- Butchers paper
- Bibles
- Textas
- Large sheets of paper
- Paper magiclay, plasticine or playdough
- Camera and props for photos

For 'Tying In'

- A3 sheets of paper, two per child
- Cotton wool balls
- Chunky brown wool, cut into 5cm lengths
- Textas

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards for each child.

Connecting In

Challenge time...

For this activity you will need to divide your children into at least two groups so that there is another group to take the challenge against, small groups of about three children would work well. You will need a container for each group that includes the same amount of items. You can choose your five items to be included in the box if you like or chose from the following list: icy-pole sticks, straws, sheets of paper, pegs, sticky tape, paper clips, pipe cleaners, paper plates, Blu-tack, pencils etc.

'Today we are going to have a team challenge. Each group will have exactly the same resources with which to complete the challenge. With your items you will need to follow the guidelines in order to complete the challenge as best you can in the time available; you will have 3–5 minutes as a group to complete this task.

'Each group is trying to make the tallest tower that stands on its own. You must use all five of the items that you have been given. Each tower must have three legs and a flag.'

When the time is up call 'stop'. You will need to have a leader (chosen at the beginning of the activity) as the judge to check the completed towers and make sure all the guidelines have been adhered to. The judge will make a decision based on the guidelines being followed and the height of the tower.

Link... 'There are lots of things that are judged; today we had a challenge with guidelines that needed to be met in order for your group to win. We had a judge come and inspect the final product and make a judgment about which group had done the best and win the challenge.

→ I wonder if you can think of some situations when things, people or items might be judged. *(Allow some time for the children to give some suggestions.)*

'There are times when you might make a judgment about some items regarding which is best for what you need. You might find there are times when you are judged for your behavior or what you have said. And there are times when some people's bad behavior finds them in court waiting for a decision from a 'real' judge.

'Today we are going to explore a passage from the Bible where Jesus talks about how everyone will be judged for the things that we say, think and do. Let's have a closer look at this together.'

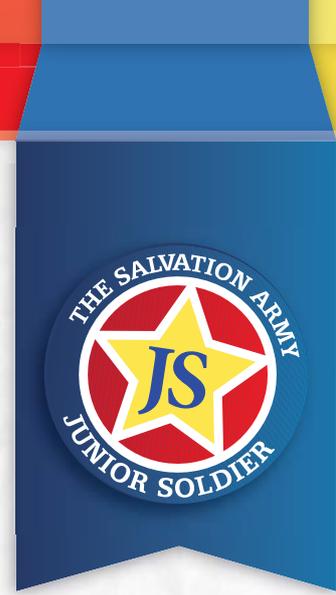
The Main Thing

Who makes the rules?

- Can you tell me what some of the rules are in your classroom at school?
- What happens if you do not follow these rules? What are the consequences?
- Who makes the rules in your classroom at school? What about the whole school rules?
- Can you tell me what some of the rules or responsibilities are for your household?
- What happens if you do not follow some of these rules? What are the consequences?
- Who makes the rules for your household?

'There are rules all around us; almost every area of our life has rules. If you drive a car on the road you have to follow the rules. If you play a game of soccer you have to play according to the rules. If you are at home or at school there are rules. Even if you go to McDonald's there are rules—imagine if you said, 'I'd like 15 frozen Cokes and I'm not paying.'

'If there are rules, there are consequences. It's pointless having a rule if someone breaks it and nothing happens. Imagine if you were playing a game of netball and you tackled the person who caught the ball! The umpire would say, 'That's against the rules' and you would be in trouble.



'Well, just like every other aspect of your life, there are rules for each of us that are followers of Jesus. I wonder if you can think of some of those rules that God wants us to live by; what can we do and not do if we are trying to be a good Christian? *(Allow a few moments for the children to make some suggestions.)*

'If the teachers and principle make the rules for schools and classrooms, and parents or grandparents make the rules for your house: who makes the rules for Christians? *(Allow the children to answer.)*

'Why do you think God gets to make the rules? *(It's his creation, he made it, he gets to make the rules. Without God we wouldn't even exist.)*

'There are certain rules that apply to how we treat people and how we are to behave, for example, you can't just walk up to a stranger and hit them for no reason, you can't take someone else's lunch because you want it, you shouldn't lie to your parents.

- I wonder if you can think of some other rules to live by.
- If someone was not to follow one of these rules, what would happen? What would the consequences be?
- Who makes the rules for where we live? Who makes the judgments about consequences?

'When someone doesn't follow the law where we live, the police will usually be involved and then they may need to go to court. When you go to court you will be held accountable for what happened; you will need to share information with the judge about what you have done and the judge will make a decision about if you should be punished.

'We just talked about God making the rules for us so that we can live our lives in a way that is pleasing to him, and we have also looked at what happens when rules are broken and being accountable for our behavior. We are going to explore a passage from the Bible where Jesus talks about how everyone will be accountable for the things that we say, think and do. Let's have a closer look at this together and see what God might be saying to us.'



What does the scripture say?

For this section it would be good to read the scripture all together and then divide into small groups and look at it again in more detail. Each group will need some butchers paper, Bibles and some textas. You will also need to have available for each group the materials needed for the 'Create' section, depending on which activity they choose.

Read Matthew 25:31–46 as a whole group

Explore the passage again in small groups and write and draw some notes or responses to the following.

- I wonder what stands out for you in this passage.
- I wonder what you think are the most important sections of this passage.
- Do you have any questions that come to mind after reading this passage?
- I wonder what you think this phrase in the passage means, 'Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created.' *(Allow some time for the children's responses but it would be good to explore the idea of heaven at this point.)*
- The last verse talks about eternal life and punishment forever *(you might like to read it again)*, tell me what you understand about these.

Create

In your small group, choose one of the following ways to create and represent some of the important aspects of the passage you have just explored together.

- Create a cartoon/movie strip or storyboard (a strip of pictures of key sections of the passage).
- Create a scene using paper magiclay, plasticine or playdough to make the people, sheep and goats etc.
- Create some still images that can be taken as photos that can share the key aspects of the passage.

When each group has finished their creation it would be great if they could share them with the whole group and what the important things are that they picked out and how they chose to represent them.

‘You know, Jesus spoke a lot about the joys and privileges of being a believer in God, but he also spoke about our obligations and the fact we would each, one day, be held accountable for our behavior and our attitudes and our relationships with others and with God.

‘The fact is, life has rules, and if there are rules there must be consequences if you break the rules. And if there are consequences to be decided, there must be a ‘decider’. When it comes to judging how someone has lived their life, the judge is God.

‘Very importantly, God has made it clear that he will judge us, that there will be consequences and what those consequences are. This is like your mum saying, ‘If you don’t clean your room today, there will be no TV for you tomorrow.’ If you then choose not to clean your room and, consequently, you miss out on TV the following day, you can’t really complain, can you? You knew the rules, you knew your mum would judge you, and you knew what the consequences would be.

‘God wants us to be with him in heaven for ever after we die and are judged; he wants to judge us and say, ‘Well done, you have loved me and loved others, welcome to heaven.’ God does not want to send anyone to hell—that is why, in the Bible, he makes it clear that we will be judged, he will judge us and there will be consequences if we don’t obey God’s rules for living. God has been very fair in warning us that we will be held accountable for how we live.’



Tying In

Personal reflection...

For this section you will need some sheets of A3 paper (enough for two sheets for each child), textas, craft glue, cotton wool balls and some chunky brown wool cut into 5cm lengths.

- On one sheet, encourage the children to stick some cotton wool balls to create a sheep's body.
- On the other sheet have them stick some short lengths of the chunky brown wool to create a goat's body.
- Get the children, using a texta, to draw around the outline of the cotton wool and create the extra elements of a sheep, e.g. head, ears, legs etc.
- Get the children, using a texta, to draw around the outline of the short lengths of chunky brown wool and create the extra elements of a goat, e.g. head, ears, legs, tail etc.
- Above the sheep, write 'Choices that are pleasing to God' and across the bottom of the page write, 'My father has blessed you, come and receive the Kingdom...' (Matthew 25:34)
- Above the goat, write 'Choices that are not pleasing to God' and across the bottom of the page write, 'Get away from me! You are under God's curse' (Matthew 25:41)

When the children have finished ask them to find a space where they can reflect using their sheets on the passage and teaching from today.

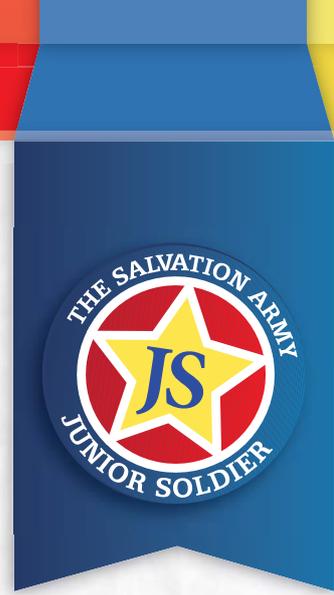
- Reflect on some of the things that you think, say and do; some of the choices that you make. I wonder which page they would sit on?
- Ask the children to spend some time with their sheet and with God as they pray about the things they have reflected on.
- Have a leader finish in prayer for the whole group asking God to help each of us with our choices about the things that we think, say and do.
- Encourage the children to take home their sheets and use it as their 'Home & Beyond' to remind them about the things that they think, say or do and which sheet they might be sitting on, the one with the sheep or the goats.

Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Sheep and Goats

- Stick your sheep and goats sheets up in your room or somewhere where you will see them through the week.
- At the end of each day, go through some of the choices you have made about what you think, say and do and see which sheet you think they should appear on.
- Share some of the choices that you have found challenging with your family or Big Bud so that they can pray and support you.



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